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SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/CE, DRL/MLGA, AND DRL/AE

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SUBJECT: FM SIKORSKI PITCHES U.S.-POLISH TEAMWORK ON  
COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES TO A/S POSNER

REF: WARSAW 1018

Classified By: Ambassador Feinstein for reasons 1.4 (b)  
and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: FM Sikorski told visiting DRL A/S Posner that it is in the U.S. and Polish "national DNA" to share the benefits of liberty with the world. He said that together, U.S. resources and Poland's transformational experience could reinvigorate the Community of Democracies (CD). Sikorski described ways the CD could become more action-oriented, such as coordinating like-minded states' votes at UNGA and the Human Rights Council, where authoritarian governments have manipulated deliberations. He suggested that President Obama's attendance at next year's CD tenth anniversary event in Krakow to "re-launch" the CD would be the best occasion for a presidential visit to Poland. A/S Posner also visited the offices of the CD Permanent Secretariat, where he discussed with think tank representatives future directions the CD might take. Participants also noted areas like the EU Eastern Partnership Initiative, where the U.S. and Poland could work together to share lessons from the Polish experience. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) In an October 8 meeting with DRL A/S Posner, FM Sikorski expressed confidence that, working together, Poland and the United States could reinvigorate the Community of Democracies. "We have in common the determination to share the benefits of liberty. It's written in our national DNA," Sikorski said. The U.S. has global reach and significant resources, while Poland has abilities the U.S. does not, e.g., Poland can reach out to countries where governments and citizens are wary or reluctant to engage the U.S. Poland also has the first-hand experience of its successful political and economic transformation. "Our message to people in Burma and Iran is, 'we did it, so can you.'" Poles benefited from U.S. support for underground activists and programs like Radio Free Europe. Similar, but expanded, programs are needed around the world, Sikorski argued.

¶3. (C) Sikorski expressed hope that by 2010 the U.S. Administration would be prepared to support democracy promotion, "this time with peaceful instruments." Unlike ten years ago, when the world celebrated "the end of history," today there is an alternative model to liberal democracy. Autocratic rulers in China and Russia will not go away. In fact, their influence in Asia and Africa is spreading. "We must not give up. We must retool our armory," Sikorski stated. He urged that the Obama administration should not let a desire to be pragmatic and to engage overcome its firm commitment to advocating forcefully for human rights and democracy.

¶4. (C) Sikorski argued the CD could be effective not just as a pragmatic, action-focused tool for sharing know-how, but also as a public diplomacy tool. In addition, the CD could coordinate actions of like-minded states in multilateral fora. "We're losing votes at UNGA and in the Human Rights

Council because autocracies are skewing procedures. The West should not be bamboozled," he continued, stating the CD could organize a defense against such tactics.

15. (C) Sikorski said the Polish MFA, the Lithuanian Presidency, and the CD's Warsaw-based Permanent Secretariat hoped to use a high-level 10th anniversary summit in Krakow to re-launch the Community of Democracies. "I can think of no better reason for President Obama to come to Poland," he stated. Later, he argued that the Obama Administration was in danger of being tagged as too focused on realpolitik -- "you need more idealism in your foreign policy."

16. (C) Posner told Sikorski that it would take considerable energy to define what the CD is, what it should do, and who is included. He expressed hope that Poland would use its strong relationship with the Lithuanian Presidency to focus the CD on practical action. Recognizing that the best way to effect change is from within a society, the CD could best add value by helping democracy activists within their own countries, Posner said. The Polish model in particular offers impressive strategies and tactics, which, if replicated in other countries, could have a significant impact, he continued. Posner told Sikorski that Ambassador Feinstein (at that time en route to post) attended the CD's launch in Warsaw in 2000. He noted that Feinstein is a strong democracy advocate, one who will work closely with Poland to define what the CD is and what it should do.

17. (C) Sikorski agreed, pointing to a September conference in Warsaw designed to express solidarity with Iranian women activists (reftel). Sikorski said the CD could undertake

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additional initiatives, such as wider dissemination of a handbook prepared by the Polish MFA on how diplomats can support human rights NGOs and democracy activists. He also suggested the CD could work with think tanks and universities to develop a "Democracy Index" that would rate countries' democratic systems. The CD can play an important role in spreading the notion that democracy is not just about elections, but about participation in democratic processes. Posner noted that President Obama's Cairo speech had laid out similar arguments. Sikorski suggested the CD should focus on outreach to regional and municipal government officials in autocratic countries, such as China. Unlike at the national level, citizens do have some input at the local level. "We need to get democratic leaders at the bottom involved," he said.

#### DISCUSSION WITH POLISH THINK TANKS

18. (C) During a visit the next day to the offices of the CD's Permanent Secretariat, Posner met with MFA representatives and Polish think-tankers, who said Poland was eager to share strategies and lessons learned from its own experience of transforming a closed society into a democracy. MFA Americas Desk Director Artur Orzechowski said Poland had identified three primary tools: the CD, the EU's Eastern Partnership Initiative, and the UN Human Rights Council. He praised the U.S. decision to re-engage the HRC and expressed hope for U.S. backing for Poland's candidacy. Henryka Bochniarz, head of the Polish Confederation of Private Employers, focused on the role played by labor unions and by women in Poland's democratic transformation. She suggested the CD ought to focus on both aspects in its future work.

19. (C) Eugeniusz Smolar of Warsaw's Center for International Relations said the decision to base the CD's Permanent Secretariat in Warsaw had reinforced Poland's identity as a defender and promoter of democratic transformation. He argued that more NGO participation in the CD is needed to protect against "diplomatic compromises." While creative management would be needed to resolve tensions between governments and NGOs, greater NGO participation would keep

governments honest. Michal Safianik, the Permanent Secretariat's Deputy Executive Director, reported that the CD was working to expand NGO participation and pointed to the September conference with Iranian women activists as an example.

¶10. (C) Smolar suggested one way to overcome the legacy of the previous Administration's policy of democracy promotion from 30,000 feet was to focus on pluralism and rule of law. He said the U.S. could play an important role in the EU's Eastern Partnership Initiative and lamented that the Commission had only devoted 600 million euros to the project.

"That's enough for one country, not six. We could use your help," Smolar said. Marek Ostrowski, foreign affairs editor of "Polityka" weekly news magazine, cautioned against too close a linkage between the U.S. and the CD, stating that many countries perceived a U.S. tendency to impose systems from the outside. Noting that democracy promotion was not a "sexy subject," he suggested that the CD could use a media strategy focused on famous faces, big events, and young people. He noted that figures like Lech Walesa could play a key role.

¶11. (C) Posner thanked participants for their constructive suggestions, but cautioned that much energy would be needed to "re-launch" the CD, including answering a number of difficult questions. First, participants need to define what the CD is and who gets to participate. Is it an intergovernmental body or a broader forum? Second, what are its role and mandate? Participants will need to accept that not all stakeholders' visions can be accommodated. Third, what value will the organization add, and is it worth the investment? Posner noted it would be similarly difficult to construct a "Democracy Index." At the least, the CD can be a forum for discussion and debate, but that is probably not enough. The CD could also serve as a laboratory for ideas on democracy promotion, or as a common forum for technical support, exchanging experiences and best practices, and program coordination. The latter option would be especially useful in places like China where Western countries with rule of law programs are "tripping over one another." Posner noted the problematic nature of political engagement, pointing out that a number of CD-affiliated governments are part of the problem in fora like the HRC. In the spirit of friendship, the U.S. would like to help interested parties figure out how to make the CD work.

¶12. (C) COMMENT: Re-launching the CD will require an

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investment of time and energy, and it remains unclear what FM Sikorski's vision is and how to make the tenth anniversary more than a commemoration. We now need to decide what shape and form the CD should take. The theme of Poland's 20th anniversary celebrations of the peaceful transition of 1989 is "Freedom: Made in Poland." Helping Poland put its trademark on democracy promotion -- not just in Eastern Europe, but also in Iran, Afghanistan, and Latin America -- reinforces our goals of helping our Ally become a more self-confident and outward looking partner and expanding our strategic partnership beyond strictly security matters. We will also want to work on how the CD can be energized and more broadly useful.

¶13. (U) A/S Posner has cleared this cable.  
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